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The Effects of the Daily Five, Developed by Gail Boushey & Joan Moser, on Classroom Literacy Instruction

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The Effects of the Daily Five, developed by Gail Boushey & Joan Moser, on
Classroom Literacy Instruction

By

Jason Matthew LaShomb

August 2011

A thesis submitted to the

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The Effects of the Daily Five, developed by Gail Boushey & Joan Moser, on
Classroom Literacy Instruction

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Chapter One: Introduction

As a substitute teacher, I have been able to take part in classrooms and experience different teachers' literacy approaches that offer a variety of unique formations and combinations of activities. Many formats fail to demonstrate one cohesive model that supports students' independence and harnesses their individual needs all at once. Different programs call for a teacher's constant attention to students, which tends to take away from the concentration of delivering specific instruction to students who generally need it most. Through personal experience, as a teacher, with guided reading and basal series at early elementary grades, I have recognized students are dependent at times for guidance by the teacher. I found through my search, a literacy approach that will not only engage my students, but also teach and promote self-independence on tasks, so that as a teacher, I can attempt to attend to all my students' needs individually on a daily basis during the literacy block.

Significance of the Problem

Teachers are faced with the dilemma from year to year of how to structure and organize literacy instruction that offers the most effective approach to developing their students' reading and writing. Teachers are able to structure their literacy block in several different ways. Some teachers choose literacy centers, which can change weekly and be based on certain themes. These centers are created by the teacher and can take hours of planning and preparation. The centers can focus on specific phonics or word study strategies or target students to practice certain strategies. Some teachers may choose to spend the majority of their literacy

block teaching lengthy whole group lessons and then keep the students busy doing worksheets while the teachers try to meet with small-guided reading groups. Whichever approach teachers use, a direct correlation to its impact on a child's reading and writing development is evident : "The way teachers structure the learning environment and the way students spend their time influences the level of reading proficiency the students have attained at the end of the academic year" (Leinhardt, Zigmond, & Cooley, 1981, p. 357). Teachers generally use different strategies in order to merge what works best for their individual classroom environments. The Daily Five approach, developed by two sisters, Gail Boushey & Joan Moser, provides a framework for incorporating a holistic balanced literacy approach into a structured classroom. According to Boushey & Moser (2006), literacy blocks usually consist of a teacher-driven model that relies heavily on busywork and artificial reading and writing activities, such as worksheets. The Daily-Five is meant to be a student-driven management structure designed to fully engage students in all aspects of reading and writing (Boushey & Moser). The Daily Five incorporates the elements of a balanced-literacy approach, *read to yourself*, *read to someone*, *work on writing*, *listen to reading*, and *spelling/word work*, in a formulated structure that demands engagement and self-independence (Boushey & Moser).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to gain a better perspective on the Daily Five reading and writing approach in order to learn ways to implement a more efficient literacy block in my future classroom. I wanted to achieve an

understanding for a structure of a whole-language approach that encourages students' independence and engagement while fostering their reading and writing development. Also through this study, I have developed my own personal skills in order to become a better educational researcher. Through my research, I answered the following question using the data collected:

What are the effects of the Daily Five, developed by Gail Boushey & Joan Moser, on classroom literacy instruction?

Study Approach

My study approach consisted of a qualitative study that lasted for a six week time period of data collection. My data methods were composed of producing and administering authentic one-on-one interviews with five general education teachers currently using the Daily Five literacy approach in their instruction and classroom observations of the Daily Five. The demographics of the school district where I conducted interviews consisted of schools located in the Western New York area. The schools will were located in a suburban setting.

Rationale

I pursued this topic because I feel that for elementary-aged students, the process of learning to read and write is essential and those skills may be some of the most important they will acquire in school. The reading and writing process is a life-long journey that continues to grow and build upon previously learned skills (Boushey & Moser, 2006). I wanted to gain a better understanding for a researched-based method of teaching that is centered on promoting the gradual release theory (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983), fostering independence, active

learning, and providing students substantial time to read and write, and be able to implement the method in my classroom. Interviewing teachers who currently use this practice, allowed me to gain first-hand knowledge of the program. Teachers were truthful and honest about their feelings regarding the program because the interview study allowed them to remain anonymous with their responses. Performing classroom observations and taking anecdotal notes allowed me the ability to gain a first-hand perspective on the approach and determine how well students responded to the practices of the Daily Five ideology.

Definition of Terms

For the sake of this study, the Daily Five is a commercial program defined, by Boushey & Moser (2006), as a structure that helps students develop the daily habits of reading, writing, and working independently that will help lead them to a lifetime of literacy independence. The Daily Five consists of five rotations that replace the traditional centers, which begins with a whole group mini lesson followed by a 20-30 minute work time. During the work time, the students choose one of the Daily Five rotations (*read to yourself, read to someone, work on writing, listen to reading, spelling/word work*) while the teacher meets with small groups (guided reading or specific strategy driven instruction) or holds individual conferences.

A balanced-literacy approach can be defined as programs that encourage teachers to use the best combination of phonics and whole-language instruction in order to produce an effective and efficient reading and spelling program to

their students (Allington, 2006). A balanced literacy approach can encompass guided reading, shared reading and writing, independent reading, and literacy centers for independent practice (Allington). The components conjoin explicit instruction in decoding, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension and writing along with specific opportunities for children to reinforce and practice learning in “authentic literacy activities” (Allington)

Summary

My interest in gaining new insight into teaching literacy and managing an effective literacy block, obtaining a strong foundational approach that calls for student engagement, and developing a set of procedures that brings structure to a classroom, led me to discover a new teaching approach to balanced literacy. I was able to gain a better understanding of the Daily Five program and its effectiveness in order to be able to use it in its fullest capability in a classroom of my own one day. The components that build the structure of the Daily Five are all individually proven strategies to support children’s reading and writing development. The efficiency of delivered instruction and implementation proved to offer a strong base for a format rooted in routine and structure. Through this study, I paid close attention to the students' response to The Daily Five, along with the delivery of specific instruction and how the approach proved to provide an efficient, cohesive, management system for implementing reading and writing instruction. I discovered that student response to the program was undeniably strong and each student demonstrated an invested mentality to the approach.

Data for this research was collected through teacher interviews, classroom observations, and anecdotal notes.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

When determining the value and effect the Daily Five management program has on classroom literacy instruction, it was important for me to delve into the research behind the components that comprise the approach. The components of *read to self*, *read to someone*, *listen to reading*, *work on writing*, and *spelling/word work* are accepted research based skill sets that are governed in the ideology of gradual release of responsibility and modeling within the discipline of the Daily Five program (Boushey & Moser 2006). As teachers familiarize students with the routines of the Daily Five and model through demonstration, the format of the components, students gain more responsibility toward independence and assume ownership of their own learning. It was also important for me to investigate the foundations of the Daily Five. The concepts of creating a respectful, caring, learning community where students feel responsible for creating their own learning are at the forefront of the Daily Five (Boushey & Moser).

My review of literature demonstrates what the experts in the field of education have discovered about best teaching practice related to my research question: What are the effects of the Daily Five, developed by Gail Boushey & Joan Moser, on classroom literacy instruction? I will discuss modeling, scaffolding, and the gradual release of responsibility along with components of the Daily Five.

Modeling, Scaffolding and the Gradual Release of Responsibility Theory

The theoretical framework of Lev Vygotsky (1978) supports many of the ideologies behind the composition of the Daily Five. According to Vygotsky, developmental outcomes and processes that were typically thought of as occurring ‘naturally’ or ‘spontaneously’ were, in fact, influenced by children’s own learning or “construction” of that learning. Thus, learning is shaped through social communication and interaction. This emphasis on children’s active engagement in their own learning development and on the role that oral language plays as well, led to the term of “social constructivism” (Vygotsky). Therefore, the learning and teaching provided by the teacher within a classroom offer direct contributions to changes in a child’s development, by students gaining specific tools from a more experienced being (Vygotsky). This is the concept of scaffolding instruction. Scaffolding specifically describes the process of transition from teacher assistance to student independence. Rodgers (2004) explains that the teachers play a significant role in choosing their scaffolding instruction, “Adults support children’s learning by structuring the task’s difficulty level, jointly participating in problem solving, focusing the learner’s attention to the task, and motivating the learner” (p. 504). All of this adds up to instructional decisions where responsibility falls on the teacher’s ability to act quickly in providing the most efficient form of instruction (Rodgers). It asks the teacher to use prior knowledge of curriculum and developmental insight of their students in order to apply correct scaffolds that do more than telling, but instead guides students in their instructional learning (Frey & Fisher, 2010). Through

scaffolding, Vygotsky also presented the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The ZPD is described by Vygotsky as the range of tasks between students' actual developmental level and their potential development (Vygotsky). Consequently, scaffolding is directly related to the gradual release of responsibility (Pearson & Gallaher, 1983). This gradual release is where responsibility is transferred from the expert to the learner, which ultimately results in the student taking full ownership and responsibility for the work. This gradual release of responsibility can be accomplished by teachers slowly removing the amount of assistance that is provided to the student, but more importantly, without changing the specific learning goal itself (Bodrova & Leong, 2001). A goal during the gradual release model, through guided practice, is to develop a safe and comfortable environment for students where they can begin to demonstrate and, therefore, apply what they are gaining from instruction (Fisher & Frey, 2008). By creating an atmosphere where the learning task simply stays the same throughout instructional practice, scaffolding provides a different format when compared to other instructional practices where tasks are required to be broken down into their most basic forms, allowing for watered-down material (Bodrova & Leong, 2001). The launching of each component of the Daily Five specifically follows the gradual release structure. Through the modeling of strategies, students are able to slowly attain instruction of a given task, and responsibility is then exemplified, as there is a shift from teacher to student (Bodrova & Leong, 2001). It is important to note that mastery of a specific skill is not required nor is it an expectation during this time; the teacher

is there to simply provide support, through scaffolds, in order to guide learners, then remove themselves in order to observe what the students do with the scaffolds (Fisher & Frey). A teacher never wants a scaffold to become a crutch, where the child becomes dependent on the aid in order to complete a task (Fisher & Frey).

The theory of the gradual release of responsibility (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983) is pivotal to Pearson & Gallagher's study, as the results paved the way for the importance of structure in academic instruction within a classroom. Within Pearson & Gallagher's study, reading comprehension was at the forefront of focus in order to examine the contribution that instructional practices have on the process. Pearson and Gallagher assessed four different classroom frameworks and their effects on students' abilities to comprehend text. By observation and comparison of existential descriptions, existential proofs, pedagogical experiments, and program evaluations within the classroom structure, the researchers were able to analyze the results for full conclusion of the importance of the gradual release of responsibility. Through their findings, Pearson and Gallagher concluded that any type of academic task can be conceived by requiring varied levels of teacher and student responsibility in order to reach completion of a task successfully. Pearson and Gallagher created a diagram (*Figure 1*) illustrating the responsibilities of the student and teacher on a given task.

Figure 1

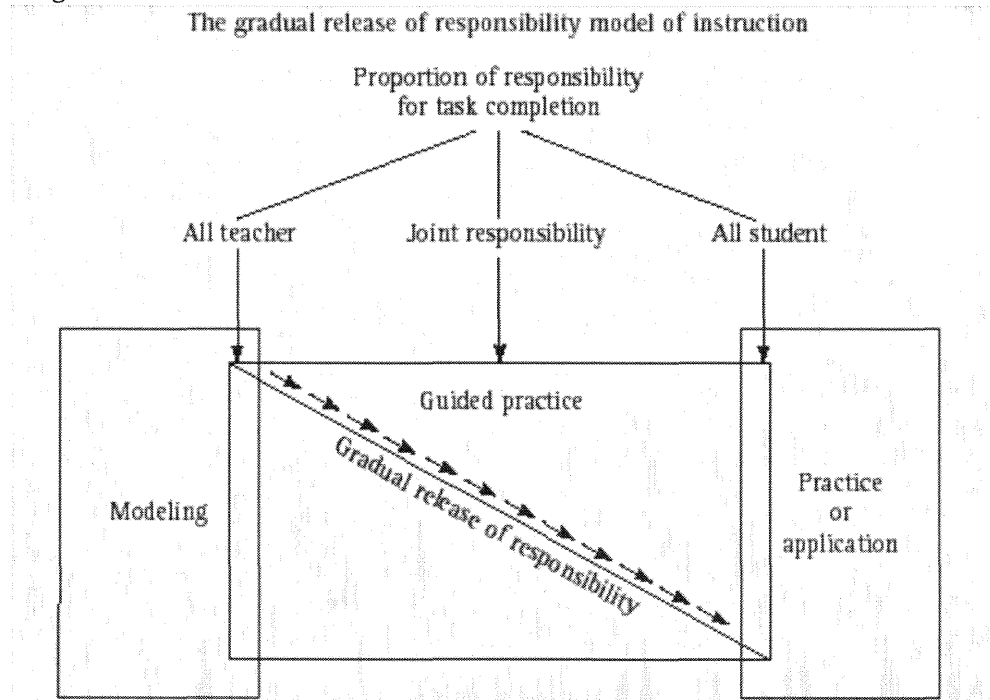


Figure 1. Gradual Release of Responsibility Model developed by Pearson & Gallagher (1983).

When the teacher garners most of the responsibility, it is exhibited through modeling and explicit instructional delivery (Pearson & Gallagher). When the student is asked to assume responsibility, the gradual release is exhibited through the student practicing or applying that strategy specifically to a task learned from the teacher (Pearson & Gallagher).

Harvey and Goudvis (2000) describe the concept of 'gradual release of responsibility' as

teaching a strategy by modeling for the whole class, guiding students in its practice in small groups and pairs and providing large blocks of time for students to read independently and practice using and applying the

strategy... All instruction is geared toward children using these strategies independently, applying them if and when they need them. (p. 12-13)

As a teacher, implementing the Daily Five, before each component *of read to self, read to someone, listen to reading, work on writing, and spelling/word work*, the teacher's role is to introduce, model, practice, and then eventually place sole responsibility for the tasks on the students. Eventually the goal of the reader is to be able to use these strategies independently and unconsciously (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). The responsibility on the student also requires that the student determines whether they are self-monitoring and applying the strategies correctly (Pearson & Gallagher). Responsibility within the Daily Five is built slowly by providing small tasks in the implementation phase and then eventually building more stamina through the use of adding additional time on task.

Teachers must understand that students gain very little from performing tasks with scaffolding that they can already do independently. Vygotsky (1978) suggested that more challenging tasks performed with a teacher's aid and proper use of scaffolding instruction leads to a higher level of learning. Students accomplish more during difficult tasks in collaboration with an adult, or more capable being, than independently (Vygotsky, 1978).

To exemplify the importance of scaffolding and the gradual release of responsibility, it is beneficial to look at a study conducted by Beed, Hawkins, and Roller (1991). Through transcribed dialogue, the authors illustrate how scaffolding is used in reading instruction. The example is about a young boy (John), who never attends to titles or illustrations prior to reading a text but

immediately opens a book and attempts to decode words. The teacher decided to introduce a set of prereading questions in order for John to become more independent in gaining meaning from text.

Prereading Questions:

1. What do you know from the title of the story?
2. What do you want to know after reading the title?
3. What do you already know about the ideas in the title?
4. What do you know from the illustration?
5. What do you want to know after seeing the illustration?
6. What do you already know about the ideas in the illustration? (Beed, Hawkins, and Roller).

The purpose of prereading questions for John were to serve as a scaffold, teaching and reminding him prior to actually reading the story (Beed, Hawkins, and Roller). Her hope through collaborative dialogue was to guide him and to have him eventually assume the responsibility for using prior knowledge to increase his comprehension. Through specific modeling of the prereading questions, the task is then practiced with the help or assistance of a more capable being (teacher), then more responsibility is placed on the student to perform the task on his/her own. Through this process, the student learned to “internalize some of the more active ways of answering the prereading questions” (p. 653). The student gained valuable skills in order to process and break down prereading questions through his own cognition. Through the help of guided practice by a more capable being, in this case the teacher, the student was able to gain his own responsibility for becoming an active participant in comprehending his reading. The student was able to become self-sufficient after specific modeling of prereading questioning. The role was transferred slowly through a gradual process of passing more and more responsibility from the

teacher and placing it on the student in order for him to become self-reliant.

Thus, eventually no longer needing the aid and guidance of the teacher.

Components of the Daily Five

The components that the Daily Five is comprised of are research based instructional methods that have been proven effective for several years (Boushey & Moser 2006). The Daily Five takes those methods and formulates them into a specific management approach that offers directionality for teachers. A direct correlation between the efficiency of students' reading and writing development and the structure of literacy instruction provided is evident. According to Leinhardt, Zigmond and Cooley (1981), "The way teachers structure the learning environment and the way students spend their time influences the level of reading proficiency the students have attained at the end of the academic year" (p. 357).

The first component of *read to yourself*, asks students to read independently every day. Reggie Routman (2003), a pioneer in independent reading, believes that students should have the opportunity to select their own books and the teacher should be available for the possibility of offering guidance in selecting 'just-right books.' Routman also strongly believes that students should read on their own for a minimum of 30 minutes or more. During the independent reading time, teachers should monitor students for their comprehension of text. The best way to become a better reader is to practice every day, with books that students choose on the "just-right" level (Routman). Reading then soon becomes a habit for students (Boushey & Moser 2006).

Research shows that independent reading by students is a crucial learning component where the reader must assume responsibility for applying smart reading strategies and behaviors in order to gain and maintain understanding of literature (Routman). By providing sufficient independent reading time for students, teachers deliver indispensable practice that literacy learners require in order to become successful, self-regulating, and self-monitoring readers (Routman). Routman states, "A carefully monitored independent reading program is the single, most important part of your reading instructional program" (p. 87). The value students gain from carefully choosing appropriate leveled books is invaluable to their everyday independent reading and writing development.

The next component of the Daily Five is *read to someone*. Oral reading to another peer allows more time for students to work on practicing specific reading strategies, helping improve their fluency and expressions, checking for understanding, hearing their own voices, and sharing in the learning community of the classroom (Topping, 2001). Reading orally with someone helps readers, especially struggling readers, become more self-sufficient, and more reliant on themselves rather than the aid of teachers. Oral reading also helps increase reading involvement by students, their attention, and collaboration skills within the classroom community (Topping, 2001). Miller, Topping, and Thurston (2010) investigated the role in which peer-reading directly influences a child's self-esteem. The researchers analyzed a randomly selected sample group of students over a 15-week study of peer-learning. A pre and post-exam of self-

esteem was administered to students within the study. The results of the study concluded that peer reading can in fact enhance self-esteem and directly effects students' abilities to gain self-worth.

The third component of the Daily Five approach is *working on writing*. Similar to reading, the best way to become a better writer is to practice writing each day (Shanahan, 1984). Reading and writing are suggested to be a reciprocal processes meaning that each directly benefits and impacts the other (Shanahan). according to Shanahan both procedures require active cognitive processing. Therefore, what is learned as a result of reading can be beneficial in the writing process. In return, instruction learned from writing can contribute achievement in the reading process (Shanahan). Fountas & Pinnell (2009) state, "Both reading and writing are part of a larger processing system, and they are related at every level of language learning" (p.293). Efficient readers often think like writers as they contemplate how to craft their ideas; and writers read their own material like readers as they reconsider the text and how it communicates and flows. By writing each day within the Daily Five, students are contributing to their schema of reading development. Writing can contribute to reading in the following ways: Students gain the ability to recognize the specific features of letters (stems, lines, circles), use parts of words (beginning, endings, syllables) to encode them, apply their thinking about the organization of text, and summarize information through specific writing tasks (Fountas & Pinnell, 2009).

The fourth component of the Daily Five is *listening to reading*. By hearing examples of efficient fluent readers and excellent literature, students learn more

words, and thus expand their vocabulary, becoming better readers (Routman, 2003). Hearing examples of fluent readers can be provided by another teacher, older reading buddies, volunteers or be aided by the use of audio sources where students can listen to reading. Listening to a read aloud is a powerful way to engage children in the literacy process (Trelease, 2001). Several researchers have demonstrated the significant impact of the read-aloud practice in different areas of reading development (Barrentine, 1996; Sipe, 2000). Listening to reading provides a long-recognized list of benefits of providing a reading model, conditioning a child's brain to associate reading with pleasure, exposing students to a variety of books and genres, creating background knowledge, stimulating students' imaginations, stretching students' attention spans, building vocabulary, improving listening comprehension, and establishing the reading-writing connection (Trelease). Klesius and Griffith (1996) agreed with Trelease's research and documented that the read-aloud experience increases students' vocabulary development and comprehension growth. They also noted that read-alouds provide the potential to increase motivation for children to want to read while building the knowledge necessary for the successful acquisition of reading and writing (Klesius & Griffith). Reading aloud to children not only builds and supports their listening abilities; it also enhances their overall language development. Students garner a strong language base from interacting with literature that is read aloud to them (Barrentine; Sipe). Janet Allen (2001) describes teacher read-alouds as a 'magical time' since students don't have to decode the text for themselves. This allows them an opportunity to fully

immerse themselves within the content of the story and form mental images as they listen to the words being read (Allen).

The fifth and final component of the Daily Five is *spelling* and *word work*. Accurate spelling allows students to write more fluently, and therefore speeds the process of translating thinking into writing on paper (Ehri, 1997; Gentry, 2004). This is an essential skill for not only writing development but reading as well in order to create a strong foundation (Gentry). Ehri discovered that learning to read and learning to spell are mutually facilitative and reciprocal processes. Ehri concluded through observations that, "Students need explicit spelling instruction as well as explicit reading instruction. Spelling should not be acquired through reading instruction" (p.265). By constructing the beginning reading-spelling connection, Ehri (1997) inferred that "the reason why spelling helps reading is that spelling instruction helps to cultivate students' knowledge of the alphabetic system which benefits processes used in reading" (p. 261). Gentry (2004) supports Ehri's contention that spelling instruction aids in reading development and its process. Gentry (2004) presents that early spelling knowledge aids in children's learning of the alphabetic principle or in retrospect breaks the code for reading. An emergent reader discovers that, as their encoding skills begin to form, their ability to decode text also exhibits improvement. As teachers provide background knowledge and explicit instruction for emergent readers to decode words, such as the knowledge of letters, sounds, the concept of a word, phonemic awareness, knowledge of letter-sound relationship, knowledge of spelling patterns (phonics), and how sounds

bring a pattern of consistency to a difficult system of reading printed language- they are teaching fundamentals that are needed for the reading and writing process (Gentry 2004). In order to provide students with the right tools to be successful in reading, teachers must provide clear, concise, and explicit instruction, in a formulated spelling approach.

Both the gradual release of responsibility theory model (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983) and the components of the Daily Five offer a strategic and concrete method of instruction to foster student independence and promote a well-balanced literacy program. Through classroom observations and teacher interviews, I garnered first-hand accounts of the Daily Five's strengths and challenges.

Chapter Three: Methods and Procedures

The purpose of this study was to explore the reading and writing management program of the Daily Five (Boushey & Moser, 2006) and observe the effect the program has on students' reading and writing development. Throughout the study, I paid close attention to how the five different elements (*read to self, read to a buddy, listen to reading, work on writing, and word study*) produced one coherent formula to provide an efficient literacy block to students.

Research Question

During my study, I investigated the following question:

What are the effects of the Daily Five, developed by Gail Boushey & Joan Moser, on classroom literacy instruction?

Participants

For my research, I worked with a total of five general education teachers from various grades, all within the same school district positioned in the western New York area. The teachers I interviewed for the study all practiced the reading and writing management system of the Daily Five developed by Gail Boushey & Joan Moser (2006). The participating teachers for my study had a variety of experiences with the approach. Two of these teachers have implemented it for several years in their classrooms, after receiving extensive training. The extensive training refers to meeting both the authors, Gail Boushey & Joan Moser, and traveling out of state to attend workshops to aid their understanding of the approach. The remaining teachers adjusted themselves to the program after having limited experience with the approach. The school district for my

study is located in suburban environments. I chose these schools because of accessibility, teacher instruction, and their willingness to provide authentic data for my study.

The school district where this research was conducted is comprised of five elementary schools (K-5), two middle schools (6-8), a ninth grade academy (9), and one high school (10-12), which includes an alternative education program. The northern portion of the district is primarily commercial, while the southern portion is rural residential with an agricultural base. The district serves roughly 6,000 students.

Positionality of the Researcher

I am currently in my final semester as a graduate student at The College at Brockport, State University of New York. I am pursuing a Master's of Science in Education degree with a concentration in Childhood Literacy. I currently hold New York State initial certification in both childhood education, grades one to six, and students with disabilities, grades one to six. Over the past seven years, I have studied effective teaching and learning strategies and how to implement them in a classroom. As my knowledge of education has grown, I have adopted many new theories, but none more than from the social constructivist, Lev Vygotsky (1978). He believed that children learn through problem solving experiences with the guidance of a more qualified being. He also believed that cultural experiences play an extensive role in the development of children and their reading and writing skills. Culture not only teaches children what to think, but also how to think (Vygotsky). Therefore, if a child can gain valuable

knowledge from a more capable being, it is critical for teachers to provide an environment offering support that students to become self-sufficient learners. My most recent studies and learning have been more specific to literacy learning in an elementary classroom setting.

One of the teachers who participated in this study has been a friend of mine for the past year. The rest of the participating teachers are her colleagues who practice and implement the Daily Five into their daily literacy blocks.

Data Collection Instruments

For my study, I used a variety of two different data collection instruments to determine how the Daily Five affects students' reading and writing development. The first tool used was a self-constructed personal interview containing ten questions pertaining to the implementation and effectiveness of the Daily Five within classroom literacy. This was administered to five general education teachers that implemented the Daily Five approach in their classrooms. I anticipated the interview would give me personal feedback of the benefits or disadvantages of the program from the teachers' points of view. This allowed me to gain a better grasp of how the approach helps structure their literacy blocks, and in turn, whether it provided an efficient implementation of teaching reading and writing development.

The last tool I used were classroom observations as another form of data collection. I observed each of the five participating teachers for a minimum of two classroom visits during their Daily Five literacy block. Classroom observations allowed for recording of overall classroom practices, settings, and

general characteristics about the environment. By personally going into the classroom while the Daily Five was being implemented, it gave me a first-hand look at the students' reactions, motivations, and responsiveness to the approach. Each observation lasted anywhere from one hour and a half, all the way up to two hours and fifteen minutes. During this time, I carefully attended to the students' use of time on task, but also examined the strategies used by the teachers. In addition to classroom observations, I used anecdotal notes to record my observations. Anecdotal notes are brief notes written by the researcher that are recorded regarding specific student behaviors during a set activity. These anecdotal notes provided additional snippets of information in regards to the responsiveness of the students with the Daily Five. All the participants for my study, including teachers and students, remained anonymous through the use of pseudonyms in order to provide authentic data.

Data Analysis

For my data analysis, I used the classroom observations and teacher interviews to compile information in order to conduct constant comparison across all domains to answer my research question. In order for me to conduct constant comparison, I had to transcribe all the teacher interviews word for word. These interviews aided in offering personal insight into the teachers' perceptions of how the Daily Five effects students' reading and writing development. Data analysis of both classroom observations and anecdotal notes was conducted through comparison and careful interpretation of each observation conducted amongst the individual classrooms. A specific focus was

placed on commonalities and continual patterns that occurred when analyzing the records. It was important to look at the data as a whole and interpret it through constant comparison across all domains. By reading and rereading, both the transcripts and personal classroom observations, it helped lead me to gain an understanding for the strong structure the Daily Five approach provides for literacy instruction within a classroom.

Time Schedule

My data collection for this study began the second full week of April, 2011. The data collection process lasted for a duration of six weeks. The frequency of classroom observations occurred at a rate of two observations for each of the five interviewees. Data analysis and study synthesizing continued through the summer of 2011.

Procedures

First, I conducted an initial two-hour classroom observation in two different classrooms of the participating teachers to determine whether prerecorded interview questions (Appendix A) needed to be added or dismissed. No questions were added nor dismissed. From there, I administered approximately a 45-minute interview individually with each of the five participating teachers currently using the Daily Five within their classrooms. All the interviews were then transcribed. After a full interview process, I then compared each interview response for similar themes and ideas using a constant-comparative method. Using those interview answers, I returned into each classroom for the second observations in order to examine specific

strategies and ideas highlighted in the interviews. By collecting anecdotal notes, it assisted me further in analyzing observations within the classrooms. Finally I took all my data and compared the results using a constant comparison method to report findings about my research question.

Criteria for Trustworthiness

My goal for this research project was to collect my data in the most authentic, reliable, and valid way possible, eliminating personal bias and beliefs from obstructing the figures. I presented my findings and analysis in the same way, avoiding to bring in personal feelings and passing judgment, but rather simply reporting the information gained throughout the study.

The trustworthiness of my study is valid through a prolonged duration of study that lasted for approximately a six-week data collection period. Persistent observation is evident as my study includes a total of five interviews conducted with general education teachers who currently implement the Daily Five reading and writing management system, along with personal accounts of classroom observations. By interviewing five different teachers, this process allowed for an opportunity of different viewpoints of the Daily Five approach. The consistency of observations includes a total of ten accounts bringing authenticity to the participants' interview responses. The classroom observations allowed me to check the validity of the interview data as well. Constant comparison took place across all data results by comparing interview questions, classroom observations, anecdotal notes, and current research to draw conclusions specific to my research question.

Limitations

Limitations to this study included a small sample size, availability for observations, the overall length of the study, and the lack of comparison to alternative literacy block approaches. I am only interviewed a total of five general education teachers located within the same district and school. By interviewing a small sample size, not only did this narrow my scope of the overall results, but also since the teachers are within the same school, it added additional limitations. The use of the Daily Five within the school allowed teachers to assist off one another, therefore causing major similarities between the classroom observations. Therefore, an additional limitation is that my findings cannot be compared across other school districts that may be implementing the same Daily Five program. In retrospect, there is no comparison of other alternative literacy approaches with the Daily Five to compare its effectiveness. An added limitation within this study is the interview process. The reliability of interview participants' statements could have possibly played a role in my data and may have interfered with the research data. The teachers may only have given answers that they feel suffice my research goal. Insufficient answers from the participating teachers can be caused by what is known as the "researcher effect." Researcher effect occurs when a researcher's cognitive bias causes them to subconsciously or inadvertently influence the results of an experiment (Shuttleworth, 2009). The effect could jeopardize the validity of the results of my interview data, but I worked to safeguard the

integrity of this work by my conscious recognition of the possibility of interference from any researcher effect.

Chapter Four: Findings

The objective of this study was to determine the effectiveness of the Daily Five management program, written by Gail Boushey and Joan Moser, on classroom literacy instruction. The Daily Five is a program that claims to provide students with opportunities to become self-sufficient learners and engage in authentic literature on a day-to-day basis (Boushey & Moser, 2006). My goal and focus throughout this study was to determine whether the design of the program contributed to these feats and how well it aided the development of students. The unique aspect of the Daily Five is that it can be formulated differently for each classroom and catered to specific student needs. Through various data collection tools, I gathered and analyzed data to answer my research question:

What are the effects of the Daily Five, developed by Gail Boushey & Joan Moser, on classroom literacy instruction?

A constant comparison method was used to analyze both classroom observation and teacher interview data collected throughout my study. Interview questions were derived and formulated after two classroom observations in order to provide authentic questioning to answer the target research question. These interview questions were then followed up by ten more classroom observations amongst five different teacher classrooms. The results of this study reflect the passion and effectiveness each teacher feels the Daily Five contributes to the classroom. The teacher interviews give a first-hand account of the benefits and shortcomings of the Daily Five and also the reasoning behind why the Daily Five is used within each classroom every day. The student observations validate and

support the teachers' responses regarding how strongly the Daily Five program delivers a framework for instruction. Students demonstrate their willingness to immerse themselves in language and learn to grow in their reading and writing development.

Teacher Interviews

Through the interview process, there were many congruencies among the responses about the Daily Five program and philosophical approach (Appendix B). Teachers portrayed a strong sense of loyalty and trust when communicating with me about the Daily Five. The three teachers I interviewed, Mrs. S, Mrs. N, and Mrs. W, felt that it was one of the best transitions to shift approaches from a centers based system to the Daily Five. The teacher's underlying talk about the Daily Five's management component seemed unmatched when compared to other approaches. Students are familiar with routines and understand that interruption is inappropriate while the teacher is working with students.

The first interview question asked of each interviewee was to briefly discuss their approach to literacy. All three of the teachers had very similar answers in the sense that the district requires them to use a balanced literacy approach. Mrs. S stated, "Basically our approach to literacy, our district says we have to use a balanced approach. They say we need to incorporate independent reading, guided reading, shared reading, shared writing, independent writing, guided writing, and word study. The good thing is we do agree with that and incorporate all of those." The school principal and interviewees related that teachers within this school district are not mandated to use the Daily Five

approach. The decision of how to structure individual classroom literacy blocks is completely at the discretion of the teacher, as long as all the components of a balanced literacy approach are incorporated. Mrs. N felt strongly about a balanced literacy approach prior to using the Daily Five and agrees with the district's decision. Mrs. N stated, "As our school district directs, I follow a balanced approach to literacy. I believe that reading, writing, listening, and speaking are all equally important components of literacy. With the Daily Five, I can still implement all of those aspects through a cohesive management system." Mrs. N felt that the Daily Five approach offered her an organized and simple platform to implement a balanced approach, while still providing students to grow self-sufficiently. Since Mrs. W was the last interviewee, she simply stated in response to this question, "We use a balanced literacy approach, which I am sure all the other teachers have already said."

The next interview question provided more opportunity for response as it asked teachers what they thought the benefits and challenges of the Daily Five were. Teachers began to express their personal feelings of why they felt so strongly about the Daily Five approach. Mrs. N felt that it was one of the most important aspects of her classroom instruction. This is exemplified in her interview when she stated,

I find the Daily Five to be the most beneficial framework I've implemented in my classroom. It not only teaches the students to be completely independent, making independent learning choices and working independently for a substantial amount of time, but it also allows

me to work with individuals and small groups without the worry of what the rest of the class is working on. The Daily Five allows my students to learn through ways that they choose.

As students work independently, it allows Mrs. N to devote full attention to her students by providing explicit focused instruction. Less management of the students is required, since they are self-sufficient as a result of the Daily Five. Mrs. N also expressed her opinion regarding how she felt her classroom students' behavior and performance compared to that of other classroom students within her school building, not using the Daily Five approach. Mrs. N stated, "I find that my students appear to be far more independent throughout the day than my colleagues who do not use the Daily Five." Mrs. N, however, did encounter her fair share of challenges while trying to put into operation the Daily Five. Mrs. N stated, "I did find it challenging in the beginning to let go of the control over choosing exactly what the kids are working on and when they are working on particular activities of the Daily Five." With the Daily Five, there is less teacher direction and more student driven activities. Teachers must relinquish much of their control during the Daily Five time frame.

This concept of independence carried over to the remaining two interviewees. Both Mrs. W and Mrs. S reported that the Daily Five allowed their students to become self-sufficient and independent learners within the classroom. Mrs. S stated, "They have that independence but also are immersed with literature every day." A challenge that all three teachers agreed on was the time it takes to implement the Daily Five from the first day of school. The

teachers stressed that the process is time consuming, takes patience, and is difficult to implement initially. Mrs. W portrayed this as she stated,

It is difficult to implement from Day 1. There is a lot of modeling, practice, and then going back and modeling for students again. While doing this, you need to have patience and understand that the steps are gradual. You will lose about 6 to 7 weeks of your instruction in the beginning of the school year.

Mrs. N felt like this was a lot of instructional time to lose, especially in the beginning of the year, when development is crucial. However, all three teachers felt as though it was well worth the loss of time, since the results were astronomical. The implementation is cumbersome due to the methodical introduction of each of the five components of the Daily Five. A skill (*read to self, read to a buddy, listen to reading, work on writing, and word study*) is introduced, in the order presented, one at a time, and a new component is never added until the first skill is mastered. Therefore, depending on the students' abilities, the implementation process can be lengthy due to the explicit instruction provided. The first component introduced is *read to self*, in order for students to understand the importance of building stamina (reading quietly to themselves).

The next question posed to the interviewees was why they chose to use the Daily Five approach for their literacy instruction. To be more specific for the interviewees I formatted and focused the question as such, "Why did you choose the Daily Five approach over a more conventional format, such as, a center's based balanced literacy approach?" The strong overlying consensus was that the

teachers were drained from the amount of work a centers-based approach provided. The teachers felt that the amount of time and effort being put into centers was not beneficial enough to students, nor was it providing authentic enough situations for their students. Mrs. N stated in her interview, "I started using the Daily Five because I was horrible at coming up with a centers schedule and activities that were both meaningful and interesting for the students. I tried many different routines and formats that just never took." Mrs. S and Mrs. W stressed the endless amount of time and energy that goes into planning and then implementing new center stations each week. Mrs. W stated, "I was really tired of centers; I didn't want the students to just have busy work." Busy work sometimes serves as a tool for management in classrooms. Teachers will give students assignments to complete to force them to stay on task in order to avert misbehavior. Endless, busy work tasks don't always provide an authentic learning environment. Mrs. S feels that with the Daily Five, students are given an opportunity to learn within an authentic setting. Mrs. S stated,

One of the reasons we chose to use the Daily Five, we feel is that it gives the kids the most authentic practice and real life application of all the reading and writing. We still do all of guided reading, guided writing, interactive writing, we do all of those pieces, but the Daily Five really just lets them practice it in an independent setting. I think it allows them to be more responsible for their learning. They're in charge of it. It isn't so much a teacher directed approach.

By providing students with realistic opportunities to interact with reading and writing, students gain a better understanding and focus. Mrs. N stated that her students are, “doing what people do in real life. They pick up a book because they want to read, not because they have to.” This was an underlying theme being conveyed through the interview process amongst all the interviewees.

The next interview question asked the interviewees what their thoughts and ideas were about the Daily Five and its impact on their students’ literacy development. One strong and well-developed answer came from Mrs. S as she stated,

The students love reading and writing. I would say that they have an increased understanding of what it means to be independent. They understand why it’s important to learn to read and write every day. They have increased awareness of their own strengths and needs as readers. They know what they do well; they know what they need to work on because they have so many models of fluent reading and expression. They set goals for themselves, with what to work on through conferencing with the teachers. They can verbalize that to me, they can explain it. They ask more questions during reading time. They’re trying new things. I have seen more progress in the past two years, than I have in prior years.

Through Mrs. S’s statement, it was evident she felt very passionate about the Daily Five approach and what it has enabled her students to be able to do with their reading and writing development. The students’ increased awareness of their own strengths and needs, importance of reading and writing, and overall

growth of knowledge of what it takes to be strong readers and writers are just some of the many transformations seen within Mrs. S's classroom. Mrs. N's testament to this question was powerful as well and conveyed a strong emotional attachment to the Daily Five approach. Mrs. N stated

I teach a class with very high readers, very low readers, and everything in between. The structure and independence that the Daily Five provides allows me to work individually with two separate readers (both reading two grade levels below) for 30 minutes a day, at least 4 times a week using an intervention program. They have improved their reading tremendously in a short amount of time. I feel this is due to their intense and focused individualized reading lessons. I would not be able to devote such time to two students, however, if the rest of the class wasn't so independent with their Daily 5 activities.

Mrs. N attributes much of the success of her lower performing readers to the management component that the Daily Five provides for the rest of the class. Mrs. W believes that since students aren't doing much of the center paper work and are actually taking part in reading and writing, it has improved her students' development tremendously. Mrs. W stated, "In comparison to previous years, I would say that having more time to do that reading and writing, rather than all that paper work, it definitely has impacted their development because they are simply doing more of it."

The next question provided an opportunity to examine the Daily Five from a student's perspective. The interview question asked for the teacher's

opinion of how they felt students respond to the Daily Five approach. Mrs. N felt that her students were anxious to begin the approach and did not care for the initial implementation. Mrs. N stated, "In the beginning, many students did not like the over teaching of the Daily Five process. They wanted to just jump right in and get started. They soon realized the importance of practice in order to be successful." As stated above, the implementation is a long and tedious process; it requires patience by both the teacher and the students. Mrs. W and Mrs. S provided similar answers to this question and conveyed the point strongly their students love for the Daily Five approach. Mrs. S stated,

They enjoy it. They love it. With our first loop with this same group, we started out doing centers and then implemented Daily Five and the students told us they never want to go back to centers. They get excited about new books, they want to take books that are read aloud, to put in their book boxes in order to re-read the book. They can't wait to get books from each other and exchange. They are fighting over books.

Before Daily Five, my students were never fighting over books. Books were never a focus during centers. They go to the library now and bring books to share with everyone. They're just excited and it's neat to see.

Mrs. W shared her response as well, "They love it. If we don't do Daily Five for some reason because the schedule doesn't allow for it, they become very upset. That's how invested they are." As evident in all three of the interview responses above, students are invested in the system and acquire a true enjoyment for reading and writing through the Daily Five approach.

The next interview question produced three identical answers. The question asked, "What would you change about the Daily Five?" The response was an overwhelming, "Nothing," by all three of the interviewees. Yet part of the appeal of the program seems to be the freedom to tweak and cater The Daily Five to individual needs. Mrs. S commented that the changes that she had already adjusted in her classroom were sufficient. Therefore, neither Mrs. S nor the other two interviewees follow the layout provided by Gail Boushey & Joan Moser verbatim. The teachers have individualized aspects of the unchanged framework of the Daily Five in order for the program to fit within their comfort zones and classroom environments to meet the most important needs of their students.

The seventh question for the interview process asked teachers whether they felt students become self-sufficient readers and writers with the implementation of the Daily Five. Mrs. S believed that, yes, the program allows for students to become self-sufficient, but not solely based on the beliefs from the Daily Five. The Daily Five incorporates and has adopted many different research based strategies that have proven effective prior to the development of the Daily Five. The Daily Five takes those strategies and incorporates them together to provide an outline for teachers. Strategies such as the gradual release of responsibility model created by Pearson & Gallaher in 1983, along with scaffolding, which was introduced by Vygotsky (1978), are common components within the Daily Five approach. Mrs. S believes that the concept of scaffolding, and the implementation of it within the Daily Five, has contributed to great

success for her students to become self-sufficient. Mrs. S stated, "A lot of it is scaffolding. It is so important that you take the time to teach each of the behaviors. You teach Daily Five exactly how you would do content area teaching lessons, with the example, non-example, and you continue to go over the behavior. You very carefully and systematically go through and introduce, practice, and repeat. Practice, reinforce the previous skill taught, and then introduce a new skill and practice, practice, practice."

The last question of the interview process asked how much time the Daily Five took to implement on a daily basis and the consensus ranged from an hour and twenty minutes to an hour and a half.

Classroom Observations

Through my classroom observations, I was able to witness many poignant moments that added to not only the authenticity of the teacher interviews, but my study as well. Overall amongst the five classrooms I observed in, I found many similarities in the students' reactions to the program and some differences in the implementation of each of the components. I observed the following classrooms: Mrs. T (first grade), Mrs. M (first grade), Mrs. S (second grade), Mrs. N (third grade), and Mrs. W (third grade).

In Mrs. S's class, I observed a Daily Five schedule format as follows: It began with the *read to self* component for 30-minutes, then following with a choice of three more Daily Five activities. During the 30-minutes I observed as students brought their book boxes to meet with the classroom teacher one-on-one individual meetings. Book boxes are small containers where students keep

appropriate leveled texts they either have read in the past through guided reading groups, or books they have chosen from the classroom or school library. Over the 30-minute time frame, Mrs. S conferenced with three to four students taking time to ask about their book box books, perform a running record to use assessments to drive instruction, and carry conversation about questions or concerns the student may have about the Daily Five. Mrs. S asked the students comprehension questions about events occurring in the text, how they are chose to solve troubled words, and whether or not they have questions about what they are reading. She also asked the students to read sections of the book they were currently reading aloud to assess fluency and word solving strategies. Mrs. S recorded a detailed set of notes after each conference in order to drive instruction for areas that students may need additional support. This procedure was witnessed and evident within three of the five remaining classrooms observed. Mrs. W, Mrs. N, and Mrs. S, all performed such actions, while Mrs. T and Mrs. M did not. Mrs. T and Mrs. M performed minimal conferencing during each of their guided reading group times. These questions simply asked how everything was going so far with the Daily Five. Though I did not interview Mrs. T or Mrs. M and cannot state a definitive reason for the simplicity of their conferencing, their choices may be due to not having sufficient time to conduct such in-depth conversations with their students. In the first grade classrooms, students read to themselves for a short 10 to 15 minutes, and in my opinion, that timeframe would not allow enough time to conduct comprehension conversations.

Within Mrs. N's class I witnessed a very similar set up as compared to Mrs. S; however, there was one slight difference. During the *read to self* component, Mrs. N actually partakes in the task as well, by grabbing a book and reading alongside the students silently to herself. This, I believe helps authenticate the students' actions by the teacher modeling some of the Daily Five components herself. Students again, after *read to self* were able to make their own choices as far as activities and who they wanted to interact with the remaining components (*read to a partner, listen to reading, work on writing, and word work*). In Mrs. N's second grade class I was able to witness several students use the IPICK strategy, which aids in helping students choose age appropriate books for themselves. This is a life-long skill that students can use not only in school, but also within a public library or bookstore. IPICK is an acronym that stands for I-I choose a book, P-Purpose-why do I want to read it?, I-Interest-does it interest me?, C-Comprehension-am I understanding what I am reading?, and K-Know-I know most of the words. Each student, in all the participating classrooms, has a bookmark in their book boxes that has this acronym written out. Therefore, when a student is ready to choose a book from the classroom or school library, they are able to reference the IPICK bookmark in helping them choose appropriately leveled books. The student I observed using the bookmark was looking for a new book to read and began rummaging through the classroom library books. She had her IPICK bookmark out and addressed each component as she pulled a new book off the shelf. If she was unable to answer one of the components completely, or felt it wasn't the right pick, she would

return the book and move on to another selection. The student stated to me that she felt like the bookmark was helpful in her reading success.

Sometimes I would choose books that were too hard for me, but looked like I could read them at first. With my IPICK bookmark, I can choose books on my own, without asking my teacher all the time, that are just right for me. I really like going to my library now because I feel like I can pick out books for myself without anyone's help.

The program not only teaches strategies students can use within the classroom, but also transcends beyond the classroom. It is important for students to feel confident that they can choose books that are not going to challenge them to the point of frustration. The power of choice gives the students that sense of ownership that they are taking an active part of their learning to read and write.

Other noticeable differences through my observation were the use of teacher direction amongst the different grade levels. Both first grade teachers I observed limited the students' amount of choice by providing them with specific checklists and a schedule for them to follow each day. Therefore, students did not get an opportunity to choose every day which of the five Daily Five components they would partake in. Students were placed in a rotating schedule where three choices were provided for each of the groups of students. Students were required to complete each of the three components assigned to them for that specific day. With the younger grades, this more limited amount of choice and formal direction is more logical. Students need more teacher guidance and organization at a younger age. Through my observations, students seemed to

perform better with more guidance within the first grade level. After comparing the independence of the older students (second and third grade) to the younger students (first grade), it is evident that more direction is suitable for the younger students. Just by observing their personalities, it was evident though they needed that direction and limited choice. Students still feel a sense of independence as they still rotate and transition without the assistance of their teacher in the younger grade.

After speaking briefly with three students about their feelings on the Daily Five and their favorite aspects, one stuck out as being a surprising response. A young third grade boy in Mrs. W's class was asked, "What is your favorite and least favorite part of the Daily Five and why?" His response was,

I like *read to self* because I enjoy reading and learning about new adventures. My least favorite part of the Daily Five is *read to a buddy* because some readers read slow and stop and then go back and read word by word. I think it just takes a long time.

The reality of reading development is that not all students read at the same level as one another. However, students still need to share compassion as students grow in their development. The *read to a buddy* has no system for who-chooses-whom to read with in any of the five classrooms. I think this is a unique opportunity for students to work with their peers and friends within the classroom. However, as evidenced by this third grade boy, not all students read at the same ability level.

A student I quickly interviewed in first grade emphasized that he grasped the concept of how important it is to practice reading and writing. The boy stated, "I just want to grow to be a big strong reader and a big strong writer. You need to practice when you want to become good at something." Students are instilled with the value of practice and working hard to accomplish a goal. The young boy sounded proud of himself because he practices reading and writing on a daily basis in school. A second grade student reported to me that her favorite component of the Daily Five was the *work on writing* piece. From my past experience, generally students do not enjoy writing. They find it a cumbersome task. The girl stated, "Writing is my favorite part because you can express yourself." The power of expression is an amazing tool for students to have in order to bring to life emotion within a piece.

Within all of the classrooms I observed, students, regardless of the task, were engaged, on task, and taking part in authentic reading and writing situations. Students seemed to enjoy themselves during the tasks as many of them showed their emotions through smiling and their on-task behaviors. Students appeared to be relaxed in their activities, but yet still focused on completing the tasks at hand. It was like it was their 'down time' to take part in a book or free write a story. Stress seemed to be non-existent. There was zero pressure within any of the classrooms as far as students worrying about not completing a task. The classroom management of the students was impeccable. Students understand not to interrupt their teachers during guided reading time. Each teacher can give a hundred percent focus on the task of delivering guided

reading instruction. Within all five classrooms, students rarely became off-task and offered little to no distractions to one another. It was amazing to witness students sitting at a computer, partaking in *listen to reading*, and not become distracted with each other's screens. Again they stayed focused and continued on the task at hand.

Each classroom I observed had a separate writing workshop time block built into the class daily schedule. Therefore, this was separate from the hour and a half time block for the Daily Five. During the students', *work on writing* component in the Daily Five, they were able to basically free write about anything they wanted to share. When asking a student in Mrs. S's class, what her favorite component of the Daily Five was, her response surprised me. Through my teacher experiences, writing is one of the components that students least enjoy. This student's response was, "My favorite part of the Daily Five is work on writing. I like to write because it allows me to be able to express myself through my feelings." Through this free write component, students break free of the directionality that sometimes bogs students down, narrowing what they can write about. All but one of the classrooms provided students with no such directionality as to what they were required to write about. In Mrs. W's class, students were given two prompts to write about: "Gotta Vent" and "Brighter Side." The "Gotta Vent" piece asks students to write about something that is bothering them that occurred that current week, possibly something that made them upset or an emotion they were feeling that they had to share with someone. The "brighter side" writing piece asked students to write about

something that happened that was exciting, new, or adventurous; a highlight from the week.

Summary

Throughout the data collection process, both the teachers and students exuded a strong connection with the Daily Five approach to literacy. Through their actions and their words, the teachers and students alike exemplified the poignant components of the Daily Five and how those components improve each student's literacy development. The observations I took part in further reinforced the passion each teacher demonstrated during the interview process. The Daily Five seemed to offer a well-balanced and cohesive management system for classroom literacy instruction. The Daily Five breeds independence and provides students with authentic environments to participate in reading and writing.

Chapter Five: Conclusions and Recommendations

After using a constant comparison method for a full analysis of my research data, several themes, similarities, and differences began to emerge. These themes include the elimination of extra work for the teacher and student, the benefits of the Daily Five creating independence and ownership, time implementation challenges, and the elimination of behavior problems. My objective through my data collection was to focus full analysis on my research question:

What are the effects of the Daily Five, developed by Gail Boushey & Joan Moser, on classroom literacy instruction?

Elimination of Extra Work for Teachers and Students

Teachers are continually looking for new and inventive ways to instruct their students in a timely manner while providing the most beneficial material. I found this philosophy to be a driving force through my data collection and analysis as to why classroom teachers chose to convert to this method of teaching rather than completing centers weekly. Prior to converting to the Daily Five program, all five of the participating teachers employed a centers based instruction method for their literacy block. Centers can become very cumbersome for teachers to implement and for students to complete. Generally center tasks are changed on a weekly basis and often times require students to complete written work. Teachers are forced to be creative in their activity designs and provide new engaging ideas each weekly rotation of the centers.

This can cause loads of additional work and time for teachers in their preparation.

All three teachers I interviewed reported the simplicity and elimination of additional work for teachers and students with the use of the Daily Five. Mrs. S stated,

Daily Five eliminates busy work from centers not only for the students, but also the teachers as well. Teachers aren't spending their time prepping centers but are now instead spending their time actually planning for lessons. When we got to the end of centers, I felt like it was busy work. Something to occupy them while we were doing reading groups, when they could really just be doing reading, or listening to reading, or reading with a buddy and be just engrossed in literature.

With the concept of eliminating centers, in which students used to participate in Mrs. S's class, she is now more available to devote more time to preparing explicit instructional lessons. With the Daily Five, students aren't required to complete worksheets, additional handouts, or projects to submit to the teacher for grading. Students partake in *reading to self, read to a buddy, listen to reading, work on writing, and word work*. For word work and writing, across the classrooms, students worked on free writing of their choice and word study was a student's choice activity of using wiki sticks, rainbow words, or spiral writing, which are all hands on tasks. Mrs. N felt very similar in her philosophy for switching to the Daily Five when she stated, "I do not have to worry about kids 'finishing early' and needing more center work. I do not have to plan centers

activities for hours on end that will then have to be graded and handed back.” Not only does the Daily Five eliminate preparation time, but also time that is spent on grading submitted work.

Mrs. S believed that the elimination of centers and busy work cut down on the students’ stress of completing assignments on time. While doing centers, students would bring stress upon themselves in order to complete the tasks within a short time frame and provide quality work at the same time. Mrs. S stated,

They don’t feel stressed. When we did centers, they got stressed to get the work done. And the kids that couldn’t succeed independently struggled with centers and got extremely stressed at the fact that they couldn’t do the work that we wanted them to do. With the Daily Five, there’s less pressure on the kids and more enjoyment on learning to love reading and writing.

Not only does the Daily Five lessen students’ stress, but also favors those students who struggle with independent work. Often times if students are partaking in center activities, many questions arise about the tasks that are involved for each center since they change from week to week. Therefore, those students who are not strong independent learners need constant assistance from the teacher. In return, this leads to the teacher having to take time away from individual guided reading group instruction to help struggling students. Mrs. S conveyed that she felt strongly about not overwhelming her students with work, but rather wants to stress to students the importance of learning to love to

read and write. Through general consensus from my findings, the more the students are exposed to literature and given opportunities to immerse themselves in language, the better.

Through my observations, students remained on task through each Daily Five rotation. I concluded that with the absence of having to complete written assignments, students do not need assistance with finding additional tasks to fill the literacy block time after they have completed a task. Students were self-sufficient in the fact that they were able to work on a task until the whole group was instructed to move on. Students seemed more concerned about losing themselves within their literature and engaging in authentic reading and writing tasks on a daily basis. Students exhibited a carefree façade as they delved into their literature, but yet they took their tasks very seriously. This type of reading seemed to provide a more relaxed environment because it was their 'down time' to grab a book and just simply read. To review, that added pressure of "this is going to be graded," was gone and students seemed to enjoy this environmental setting.

The Benefits of the Daily Five Creating Independence and Ownership

A strong commonality amongst the interviewed teacher's responses was that each of them felt their students have gained strong independence as a result of implementing the Daily Five. In turn, the teachers felt that their students feel a true sense of ownership for their learning. The format of the Daily Five is constructed in such a way to allow students to make choices on their own regarding which activities to partake in and sometimes allows students to

choose how to participate in the activity. For example, within Mrs. S's classroom, students are asked to complete a word work/study rotation within their Daily Five. For word work, students have several different options they can choose to fulfill that requirement. The students' independence is fostered in these situations where they are given so much freedom to make decisions for themselves.

Mrs. N feels as though independence is an important skill focused on in her particular grade of third grade. Mrs. N states, "I LOVED the idea of teaching the students independence. Independence is one of my major foci in 3rd and 4th grade as so often our students come to us relying too heavily on adult support and approval." It is vital to instill such an important quality in students at a young age. When I asked a third grade student her favorite aspect of the Daily Five, she responded, "I really like how we get a choice of what things we can do during Daily Five. It gives me a sense of freedom and makes me feel more responsible for my choices." Through my observations, students seem to take pleasure in that opportunity of choice, and reacted in a positive manner. They enjoyed being able to choose their partners for buddy reading, they light up when given the opportunity to independently pick which computer program they will use for listening to reading, and the students enjoy when they can choose a book themselves to read.

With all choice, comes responsibility. Teachers mentioned to me through their interviews that this concept of responsibility is reiterated many times throughout the year. The teachers stated that they felt it was important to go

back after students were away from school for break to reinforce the idea to students that with independent choices, students need to take ownership for the work ethic being put in to each activity and that they are held responsible for their work being completed. Within the participating classrooms, students are required at a designated time during the week, to meet with the teacher individually to conference. This helps the teacher monitor the progress the student is making and to assure that the student is being productive during their independent choice time. Conferencing helps students understand that they are held accountable for their work and that responsibility is an important aspect to the Daily Five program. This opportunity seemed especially exciting for the students, as they were able to share their feelings and ideas about the current texts they were reading. It offers an informal open forum for students to express themselves about their emotions and allows them an opportunity to engage in literature.

As teachers gradually release more control to students and they are able to make their own choices, it gives the students an understanding of responsibility and the concept that the students own their work. Mrs. S believes that the Daily Five really

Allows them to be more responsible for their learning. They're in charge of it. It isn't so much a teacher directed approach. They have a choice, what books they want to read. We teach them how to choose those leveled books so that they're appropriate for them. It then gives them the

power to go to the library and choose a right fit book for themselves. It's not, "Here, read this book."

With more responsibility and independence, the Daily Five opens up additional time for the classroom teacher to provide explicit instruction to those students who need it most, since there is less management of the class. Mrs. S conveys this point as she stated, "It not only teaches the students to be completely independent, making independent learning choices and working independently for a substantial amount of time, but it also allows me to work with individuals and small groups without the worry of what the rest of the class is working on."

Time Implementation Challenges

Another theme that emerged from my data analysis was the implementation timeline for the Daily Five. The Daily Five program requires that teachers implement each of the five components one at a time, over a long period, in order to allow for sufficient practice. This gradual release of responsibility can take anywhere from five to seven weeks to allow students to become familiar with the Daily Five routines. Each component focuses on building stamina slowly until students eventually work their way up to a desired time on task. According to Boushey and Moser (2006), *read to self* is the first task to introduce to students. The first component must be mastered before others are introduced. It is suggested by Boushey and Moser that the components be introduced in the order of *read to self*, *read to a buddy*, *listen to reading*, *work on writing*, and *word work*. Building upon these skills takes practice, specific

instruction, examples, modeling, patience, and determination by both the teacher and students.

Through the interview process, however, teachers revealed they felt as though this involved timeline was a downside to the program. Mrs. W stated,

I would say that implementing it is a challenge because this is a new group that I have so we started from square one. It's not like you do a lot of in-depth reading instruction to start with, so it is the first, I'd say, couple months that you're still getting used to it, they're getting used to it. You start with one of the Daily Five components, and see how it works and then implement another one once the students have that under control. You spend a few days a week on one and then go on to the next one while including the previous skill learned. So if you figure, at least five weeks for Daily Five to get started, with everything.

Mrs. S felt just as strongly when she stated, "It takes a long time to initially implement with students in the beginning of the year. You lose a good five weeks of instructional time minimally." As a teacher, time is always an issue within a classroom schedule. It is important to be flexible, but yet use time to the fullest for instruction. Loosing a minimum of five to seven weeks of valuable reading instruction in the beginning of the year could be detrimental to students' reading and writing development. Through the process of introducing the components, teachers are not teaching reading skills, but rather teaching and modeling proper behaviors and routines that should be exhibited during Daily Five activity time.

Although time is essentially lost, it is not wasted. The benefits of a strong introductory process outweigh the possible detriment caused by lost time. Mrs. N believed that by losing this time attempting to put into operation the components of the Daily Five, paid off for her students once they became familiar with the routines.

I also find it challenging to devote the amount of time it takes to implement Daily Five in the beginning of the year. However, this time was recovered ten-fold as the year progressed and I was able to devote quality instructional time to my guided reading groups rather than putting out fires with students working independently.

Mrs. N felt that by taking the time to put the activities in correctly and so that students were comfortable with them, it was a great benefit rather than hindrance.

My observations within the classrooms allow me to agree with Mrs. N and her beliefs. Students seem comfortable with the routines they must follow and this allows for little to no confusion amongst tasks. Students understand and are competent in what needs to be completed at the various stages in the Daily Five. By taking sufficient time in the beginning of the year, it allows for this type of behavior to be carried out by the students throughout the school year. It was evident throughout all of the classrooms observed that a strong teacher base for the Daily Five was put into practice. Strategies were practiced, corrected, modeled, and then practiced again until students were exhibited as grasping the goal. Within the classrooms, it was evident that the approach of the Daily Five

flowed in a congruent and smooth rhythm that all students were comfortable with.

Elimination of Behavior Problems

As teachers plan their instruction, they are always looking for ways to engage their students in order to not only create authentic learning for their students, but to also eliminate behavior problems from arising. The Daily Five teaches students to be self-sufficient and, therefore, eliminates many individual behavior problems.

As I sat in the various classrooms observing the students partake in their Daily Five activities, I sat in true amazement. I have had ample experience with the same age group (1st-3rd grade). I have never seen students be able to self regulate their behavior so efficiently when given independent freedom. Students understand the system, routines, and what is expected of them and each of them executes it flawlessly. Reportedly, students who are labeled as being behaviorally and academically challenged even succeed within this set system.

Generally, with my experience in first grade, students are not able to go long periods of time on their own without teacher directed instruction. They are simply just sometimes at that age where they aren't independent in their work and need constant reinforcement by the teacher. Within my Daily Five first grade observations, however, the inability to work independently was disproven. These students were on task, making choices for themselves, and performing work the way it was meant to be completed. The classroom teacher was busy working with her guided reading group and was able to provide one hundred

percent of her attention to that group of students. Teachers throughout the five classrooms did not have to remind students to check their behavior or instruct them on the next task. Transitions from one activity to another can be difficult for students, especially at the younger age levels. Teachers are continuously trying to invent new transitional methods in order to eliminate time wasted between activities. The students, however, were unfazed by the task in the observed classrooms. Each teacher rings a subtle chime to signal that it is time to move on to the next task. Students quickly, quietly, and in an efficient manner move on to their next Daily Five choice.

Within each of the classrooms, students helped brainstorm in the beginning of the school year Daily Five anchor charts. These charts list what is expected at each of the rotations that comprise the Daily Five (*reading to self, read to a buddy, listen to reading, work on writing, and word work*). This chart is important because it not only recognizes the expectations of the students, but of the teachers as well. Students are taught in the beginning of the program that how they behave during the Daily Five impacts not only themselves, but the level of instruction that the classroom teacher can provide as well. If students are not doing what is expected of them, this takes away from tasks and expectations the teacher is trying to fulfill as well. The impact of this chart and its content is paramount for students to see because it allows them to understand how their behavior plays a role in instruction.

The same principles, as the first grade, of performing impeccable on-task behaviors, applied for the second and third grade classrooms I observed. As

students move up in age, more independent tasks are asked of students since teachers feel they are at an appropriate age to handle that type of setting. Therefore, with a program like the Daily Five, students at this age really flourish. Students, when asked to choose their first Daily Five task of the day, they picked and then moved quickly to get situated amongst the classroom. There is no time taken to remind students to start right away, or to speed up their movement in order to become situated for their task. Enjoyment for reading and writing drives students to begin right away. Again there are no distractions amongst cross over of students in each station. It is clear what task each student is doing and it is also clear that students do not abandon a task while in it. The importance of stamina gives the students the mindset that they must stay in the task until the teacher signals for a change. A sense of focus is evident amongst the students.

This notion of stamina is a “buzz word” within the Daily Five. Students understand what it means for them to build stamina while on a given task. Stamina in the Daily Five approach focuses on gradually building time spent on reading. Each day in the beginning of the year, while implementing the Daily Five, students are timed to see how long they can independently read. Generally, teachers want their students to read for a minimum of three minutes at the first attempt. The time limit, however, is contingent on when the first student in the class stops reading (Boushey & Moser, 2006). Then, the clock is stopped and the next day’s goal is to beat that time on task. This sense of time is important not only for the Daily Five approach, but for tasks that transcend the daily classroom

tasks. Stamina is important for students to understand because it translates over to things like state testing. With state testing becoming more and more of a demand with schools, students need to be able to sit for long periods of time, without creating behavior problems, and read to complete standardized tests. This focus and determination is an invaluable skill for students to gain.

Implications for My Own Teaching

Through this study, the results have provided me, as a teacher, a reliable system to implement a balanced literacy approach to reading and writing. The structure of the program is important because it allows students to be independent in their choices and allows more time on task for other teacher instruction. Using the Daily Five, students are self-sufficient; their independence would allow me more time to focus on individual instruction such as guided reading groups. As a teacher, this system will allow for a strong routine of events that provides structure for students. Students become familiar with components that are expected of them, thus allowing for a strong behavior management system within a classroom. Teaching in this format allows the framework to be altered to meet individual classroom needs and in return provides authentic opportunities for students to partake in reading and writing on a daily basis. The results of this study have provided me with the tools necessary to compose a structure of a whole-language approach that encourages students' independence and engagement while fostering their reading and writing development.

Recommendations for Future Research

Although the results from this study revealed many positive findings, improvements can be made in order to strengthen the study. Additional research needs to be completed in order to delve deeper into the comparison of a centers based approach versus the Daily Five program. I wish I was able to observe five classrooms that implemented the Daily Five program and five classrooms that used a centers based approach for their literacy block. Along with observations, I would have liked to have conducted interviews with each of the five teachers from the two different approaches. This would have given a truer sense of how strong the Daily Five approach is when compared to another approach to literacy. It would have given me a more authentic indication of the similarities and differences of the two approaches since there was no comparison within this study.

An additional recommendation for future researchers would be to observe implementation of the Daily Five during the beginning of the school year with students who have never used the program and compare it to those students who have. This type of observation would provide the researcher the ability to see the benefits and or shortcomings of introducing each component of the Daily Five during the implementation stage versus students who are already familiar with the framework routine. This would give the researcher a true sense of emotion and response from the classroom students' point of view.

Conclusions

The Daily Five commercial approach offers a strong and balanced framework for implementing reading and writing development in students. Much like other approaches, there are not only benefits, but also pitfalls that accompany the program. As exhibited by not only the teacher's responses, but the students' reactions as well, the Daily Five allows students to become independent self-sufficient learners. This attribute not only allows students to become better readers and writers, but also transcends beyond all subjects and provides a strong framework to promote a life-long learner.

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Appendix A: Individual Teacher Interview Questions

Teacher Interview Questions

1. Would you briefly discuss your approach to literacy?
2. What would you say are the benefits and the challenges of the Daily Five?
3. Why do you use the Daily Five approach to literacy instruction?
4. What are your thoughts and ideas about the Daily Five and its impact on your students' literacy development?
5. In your opinion, how do the students respond to the Daily Five?
6. If anything, what would you change about the Daily Five?
7. Do students become self-sufficient readers and writers with the implementation of the Daily Five? Why or why not?
8. How do you work the Daily Five into your instructional time?
9. How much time does the Daily Five take out of your day?
10. How does the Daily Five affect your instructional time for other academic subjects?

Appendix B: Teacher Interview Questions and Responses

	Mrs. S	Mrs. N	Mrs. W
<i>Please briefly discuss your approach to literacy?</i>	"Our district says we have to use a balanced literacy approach. So they say that we need to do independent reading, guided reading, shared reading, shared writing, independent writing, guided writing, interactive writing, and word study."	"As our school district directs, I follow a balanced approach to literacy. I believe that reading, writing, listening, and speaking are all equally important components to literacy."	"We use a balanced literacy approach as mandated by our district."

<i>What would you say are the benefits and the challenges of the Daily Five?</i>	<p>"There are a ton of benefits. The kids learn independence. Their enjoyment of reading and writing just goes through the roof. They love reading and writing."</p>	<p>"I find Daily Five to be to most beneficial framework I've implemented in my classroom. It not only teaches the students to be completely independent, making independent learning choices, and working independently for a substantial amount of time, but it also allows me time to work with individuals and small groups."</p>	<p>"The benefits of the Daily Five are definitely the kid's understanding of how the program works and what they get to do for <i>read to self</i> and <i>read to someone</i>, so they have that independence. They're doing it every day, having that reading and writing every single day, is so beneficial."</p>
	<p>"One of the huge pluses on the teacher's side is not spending your time prepping centers, but spending your time actually planning for lessons."</p>	<p>"I did find it challenging in the beginning of the school year to let go of the control over allowing the students the choice of what they are working on and when they are working on the tasks."</p>	<p>"I would say that because this is a new group that I have to start from square one with, the time it takes to implement and teach in the beginning of the year is a challenge."</p>
	<p>"Implementation time is the biggest challenge"</p>		

<i>Why do you use the Daily Five approach to literacy instruction?</i>	<p>“One of the reasons we choose to use the Daily Five, we feel is that it gives the kids the most authentic practice and real life application of all reading and writing. We still do all of our guided reading, guided writing, and interactive writing. We do all of those pieces, but the Daily Five really just lets them practice it in an independent setting. I think it allows them to be more responsible for their learning. They’re in charge of it.”</p>	<p>“I LOVED the idea of teaching the students independence. Independence is one of my major foci in 3rd and 4th grade as so often our students come to us relying too heavily on adult support and approval.”</p>	<p>“I was really tired of centers. I didn’t want them to just have busy work.”</p>
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<i>What are your thoughts and ideas about the Daily Five and its impact on your students' literacy development?</i>	"They love reading and writing. I would say that they have an increased understanding of what it means to be independent. They understand what it means to have stamina. They understand why it is important to learn to read and write everyday."	"They have improved their reading tremendously in a short amount of time. I feel this is due to their intense, focused, and individualized reading lessons. I would not be able to devote such time to two students, however, if the rest of the class weren't so independent with their Daily Five activities."	"In compared to previous years when I haven't done the Daily Five, since this is my first year, I would say that having more time to do that reading and writing, rather than all that paper work, I would say definitely has impacted their development because they are doing more of it."
<i>In your opinion, how do the students respond to the Daily Five?</i>	"They enjoy it. They love it."	"In the beginning, many students did not like the over teaching of the Daily Five process. They wanted to just jump right in and get started. They soon realized that as a class we needed to practice in order to become successful."	"They love it." "It's like 'down' time for the kids."
<i>If anything, what would you change about the Daily Five?</i>	"Nothing"	"Nothing"	"Nothing"

<i>Do students become self-sufficient readers and writers with the implementation of the Daily Five? Why or why not?</i>	"A lot of it is that scaffolding. It is so important that you take the time to teach each of the behaviors. You teach Daily Five exactly how you would do content area teaching lessons, with the example, non-example, and you continue to go over the behavior."	"Yes absolutely."	"Yes, but not solely with the Daily Five. The understanding and implementation of scaffolding help."
<i>How do you work the Daily Five into your instructional time?</i>	"We do our writing workshop first and then the Daily Five after. I really like that because if the kids want to continue working on a piece from writing they can finish it during the Daily Five time."	"It is the first thing we do in the morning."	"It's not strategically placed, I just wanted to make sure that I had a big chunk of time and have writing right after so that it would flow into it."
<i>How much time does the Daily Five take out of your day?</i>	"An hour and twenty minutes a day."	"At least an hour and a half of instructional time is devoted to Daily Five each day."	"An hour and fifteen minutes."

<i>How does the Daily Five affect your instructional time for other academic subjects?</i>	"I don't think it takes away from it at all. I think that it adds to it. It compliments it because you can incorporate your word study."	"Because I do not have to plan for useless centers activities, I am able to focus my planning time on my instruction in other academic areas. Therefore, I am able to plan for better lessons. Daily Five does not negatively affect my instructional time in other areas."	"It is a huge time block and I have noticed that with all of their practice with reading and writing, it has helped with other subjects as well like social studies, math, and science."
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